

Bishop Creek Hydroelectric System,  
Plant 4, Worker Cottage  
(Building No. 117)  
Bishop Creek  
Bishop Vicinity  
Inyo County  
California

HAER No. CA-145-4-H

HAER  
CAL  
14-BISHV,  
5H-

**PHOTOGRAPHS**

**WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA**

**Historic American Engineering Record  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
San Francisco, California**

## HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

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**Location:** Near Bishop Creek in North 1/2 of the Southeast 1/4 of Section 19, Township 7 South, Range 32 East, M.D.M, Inyo County, California (UTM 11/367115/4131690), in the eastern Sierra Nevada mountain range approximately 2.5 miles southwest of the town of Bishop, and 225 air miles due north of Los Angeles.

**Date of Construction:** c. 1928, 1965

**Builder:** Nevada-California Power Company

**Present Owner:** Southern California Edison Company  
2244 Walnut Grove Avenue  
Rosemead, CA 91770

**Original Use:** Worker Cottage

**Present Use:** Worker Cottage

**Significance:** Building 117, Plant 4 (formerly Building No. 24, Plant 4), is significant because of its contribution to an understanding of the historic character of the physical and social environment of the Plant 4 compound. Built in 1905, Plant 4 was the first on the Bishop Creek System, and it remains the system's operating headquarters. This house is one of six in the Period Revival style in the System, and was moved to its present location in 1932. The Bishop Creek System is considered significant for its role: (1) in the expansion of hydroelectric generation technology, (2) in the development of eastern California, and (3) in the development of long-distance power transmission and distribution.

**Report Prepared By:** Thomas T. Taylor, Senior Archaeologist  
Southern California Edison Company  
Environmental Affairs Division  
Rosemead, CA 91770

**Date:** July, 1997

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## I. DESCRIPTION

Building 117, Plant 4 is a one-story, wood-framed Period Revival Style cottage built about 1928. This house was apparently moved from the Rush Creek Plant in September 1938 to its present location: the most northerly house on the west side of the main residential street about 480 feet northeast of Bishop Creek Plant 4 powerhouse (photo 145-4-H-1). This cottage was part of a residential enclave of 12 houses, most of which have been demolished, where the Plant 4 workers lived. It has had major alterations from its original condition, and is currently in use as a gymnasium for Plant 4 workers.

Building 117 sits on a concrete foundation on a raised area retained by a low concrete-laid rock wall which separates the house's yard from the main Plant 4 residential street (photo 145-4-H-2). Landscaping is minimal, consisting of several shrubs along the rock retaining wall and a mature tree on either side of the front entry walkway on the southeast side (front) of the house.

Two sets of concrete steps and a concrete walkway lead to the front porch and door from the main residential street. The rear of the house is accessed from an alley that runs parallel and behind the houses located on the west side of the main residential street (photo 145-4-H-3). From the northeast side of the house, a short flight of steps leads to a back door within a small open-air utility space walled with wood latticework and covered with a curved-shaped shed-roof.

The steeply-pitched hipped roof covering the original house has composition shingles which replaced original wood shingles. The roof transitions to the side walls through a soffited, slightly projecting boxed cornice. A brick chimney with hipped sheet-metal cap and circular metal vent crowns the roof.

The projecting concrete-decked front porch is covered by a hipped-roof and supported by plain square posts at each corner (photos 145-4-H-2 and 145-4-H-4). A simple stick balustrade with criss-cross members surrounds the open porch. The handrail is a welded pipe assembly located adjacent to the centered front steps.

A gable-roofed addition was built on the southwest side of the house in 1965 (photo 145-4-H-5). Asbestos siding covers the 1965 addition as well as the original shingle siding on the older portion of the building. The original

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structure uses 3-light over 3-light and 6-light over 1-light double-hung, wood-framed windows in single and paired arrangements. The 1965 addition has aluminum-framed sliding-glass windows. All windows have a simple trim of plain boards surrounding the openings. The older windows have a projecting wood sill. The front entrance had been converted to an aluminum-framed sliding-glass door. Recently, however, it has been re-converted back to a single door by framing the double-wide doorway in wood, covering one door opening with a fixed wood-slab, and installing a flush wood-door with glazing in the other side.

The front door opens into the 11 x 29 foot living room (photo 145-4-H-6). The walls and ceiling of the original portion of this room, like the rest of the original part of the house, are plaster with decorative vertical wood stripping on the walls and horizontal stripping on the ceiling. Original doors are paneled. A wide baseboard frames the wall-to-wall carpet in this room. Crown molding is present in the original part of the living room. The addition portion of the living room is separated from the original part by a wall remnant projecting from the walls and ceiling (photo 145-4-H-7). Walls and ceiling in the addition part of the room are dry-wall construction. The addition part of the living room is illuminated by a fluorescent ceiling fixture; the original part of the room is illuminated by an incandescent fixture.

A doorway on the northeast wall of the living room opens into the 17 x 12 foot combination kitchen/utility room (photo 145-4-H-8). 1950s style built-in cabinets surround the kitchen sink, flank the 3-light over 3-light, wood-framed, double-hung window over the sink, and hang from the opposite wall (photo 145-4-H-9). Flooring is linoleum. Single ceiling fixtures in the kitchen and utility room, and a wall fixture over the sink and window in the kitchen provide illumination. The utility portion of the kitchen is separated from the rest of the room by a short wall and ceiling partition (photo 145-4-H-10). The paneled and glazed back door leading out of the utility portion of the kitchen is original. Two pairs of 6-light over 1-light, wood-framed, double-hung windows give the east corner of the utility room a continuous row of glazing.

The 10 x 12 foot bedroom no. 1 is accessed from the kitchen through a paneled door (photo 145-4-H-11). A second door, located on the southwest wall immediately adjacent to the entry door, opens to a walk-in closet. A third door, also on the southwest wall, opens to the bathroom. Single 6-light over 1-light,

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wood-framed, double-hung windows pierce the northeast and northwest walls (photo 145-4-H-12). Flooring is hardwood in the bedroom and closet. Single ceiling fixtures in the bedroom and closet provide illumination.

The 6 x 7 foot bathroom opens to both bedroom no. 1 and no. 2 (photos 145-4-H-13 and 145-4-H-14). The bathroom features built-in cabinets, linoleum flooring, and dual wall fixtures (one on each side of the mirror over the sink) for illumination. A single sliding glass replacement window in an original wood surround pierces the northwest wall above the shower/bath.

The 10 x 12 foot bedroom no. 2 is a mirror of bedroom no. 1 (photo 145-4-H-15), reflecting the flooring, closet, and illumination of the latter chamber. Originally, bedroom no. 2, like bedroom no. 1, had single 6-light over 1-light, wood-framed, double-hung windows on the southeast and northwest walls; during the 1965 remodeling, the window on the southeast wall was covered. Bedroom no. 2 is accessed through the living room.

The 10 x 14 foot bedroom no. 3 is part of the addition constructed in 1965. It is accessed from bedroom no. 2 (photo 145-4-H-16). A built-in cabinet/closet is located adjacent the bedroom door on the northeast wall. Walls in this room, like the addition portion of the living room, are dry-wall construction. Modern aluminum-framed sliding-glass windows in wood surrounds pierce the southeast, southwest, and northwest walls (photo 145-4-H-17). Flooring is wall-to-wall carpet framed by a narrow baseboard. A single ceiling fixture illuminates the room.

The project area is situated about five miles southwest of the town of Bishop, Inyo County, California. The Bishop Creek System is primarily located along the south, middle, and north forks of Bishop Creek on the steep eastern slopes of the southern Sierra Nevada Range. Plant 4 is one of five plants sited at varying elevations along Bishop Creek. Situated in the middle of the Bishop Creek System, Plant 4 is northeast of Plants 2 and 3, and southwest of Plants 5 and 6.

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## II. HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Please refer to the "Historical Context" section in the general Historic American Engineering Record for the Bishop Creek Hydroelectric System (HAER No. CA-145) for historical information regarding Bishop Creek Plant 4.

Each of the five Bishop Creek power plants, and Control Station, were originally developed with an associated residential complex occupied by operating and maintenance crews; all have now been removed with exception of small remaining enclaves at Plant 4, Control Station, and a single house at Plant 6. Building 117, Plant 4, was built about 1928 and appears to have been moved to its present Plant 4 location in September 1932 from another Nevada-California Electric Corporation location (probably Rush Creek) (Theodoratus Cultural Research 1988:A-102). The company development of employee living areas, especially at Plant 4, permitted comprehensive planning seldom seen in privately developed residential areas during this period. The setting of Building 117, Plant 4 still retains many elements of the old residential planning in this area, including picturesque curving streets, houses sited on terraces with stone retaining walls, manicured front lawns with unified groupings of shade trees, and integrally designed lighting standards.

## III. SOURCES

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#### **IV. PROJECT INFORMATION**

This Historic American Engineering Record documentation of Building 117, Plant 4 Bishop Creek Hydroelectric System, was undertaken because the building represents excess housing. SCE has automated the Bishop Creek power plants. Automation of the power plants has made it unnecessary to have on-site crews, thus, residential units like this cottage have become obsolete.

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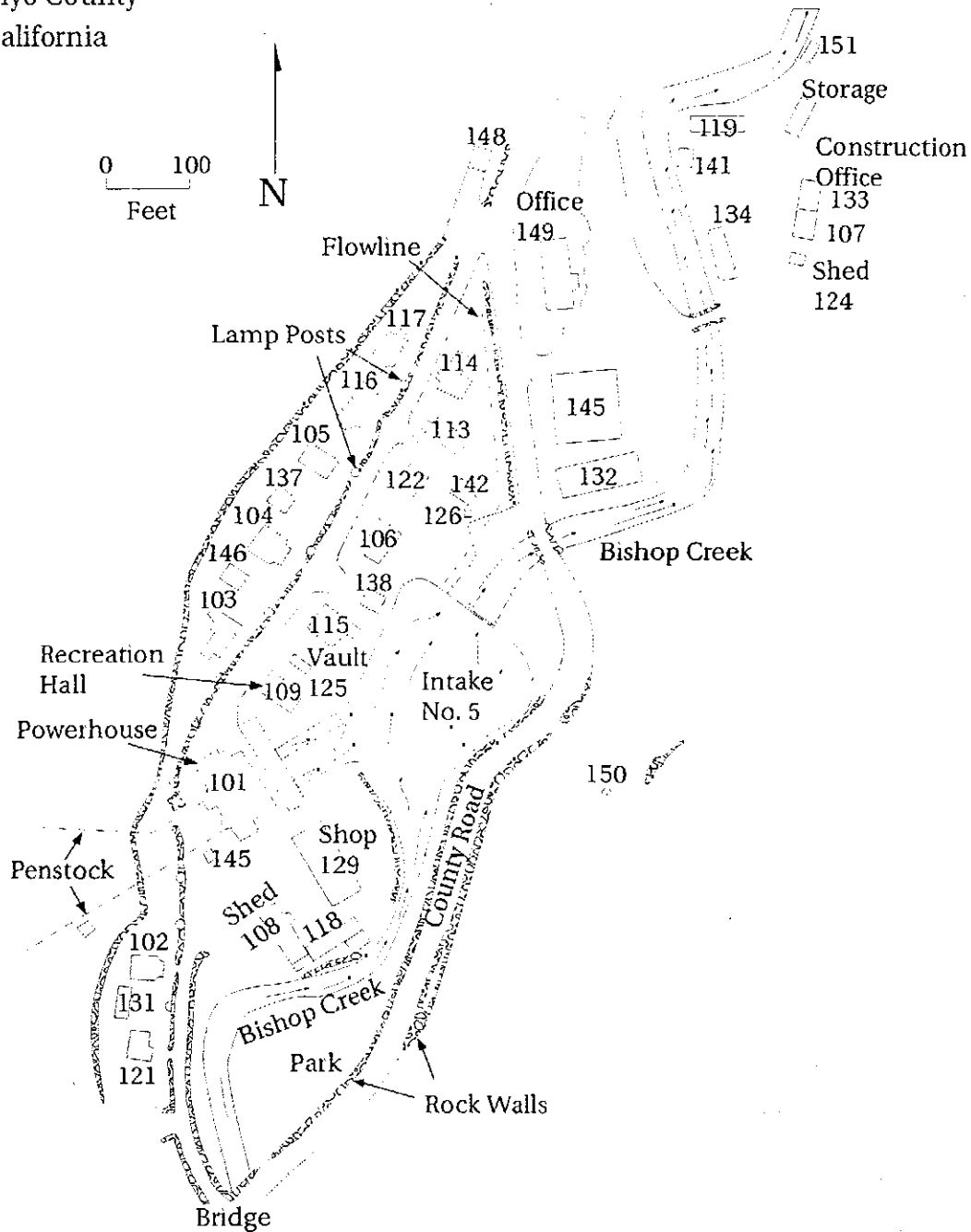
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